TL 5165

CNRT Timor-Leste

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE
(translation)

The People of East Timor have concluded an important chapter of their history which coincidentally corresponds in the history of Humanity with the closing of the second millennium.

The century just past was a difficult one in terms of forging a Timorese identity; a century in which the landmarks were the great Manufahi rebellion of 1912, the resistance to the Japanese occupation of 1942 to 1945 and the protracted war of national liberation which lasted quarter of a century and which culminated on 30 August in a magnificent act, unique in the history of the world´s Peoples.

The pain and tears which have touched every home and corner of East Timor are now the past and, today in the eyes and soul of every East Timorese is reflected hope and a renewed will to win.

Nevertheless, the CNRT has a clear notion of the dimension of the challenges which lie ahead at the commencement of the new millennium. CNRT has defined 3 stages for the first 25 years of the new century:

- A period of transition of one to two years which precedes independence;
- A second stage of true national construction which will span the first ten to fifteen years of independence and during which time the National Development Strategy will be implemented;
- The following stage will be one of consolidation of national independence.

The transition to independence will encompass two esssential aspects: the technical training of East Timorese, with the support of UNTAET, and which will commence with the physical reconstruction of basic infrastructure, and the process of political maturation of Timorese society, responsibility for which rests with the CNRT.

True development cannot exist in the absence of real democracy, and the pillar of our independence will be those values which underpin the active and conscious participation of each and every East Timorese.

CNRT is fully conscious of its historical and political responsibilities. At times there are those who are inclined to consider CNRT an incapable group of confused individuals, without taking into account that many of the demands of the present moment are actually beyond our responsibility to act upon.

As a merely political entity which lacks even the most basic conditions in which to operate, the CNRT is at the stage of identifying all of the potential socio-economic and political conflicts which may emerge as a result of the present situation of devastation and crisis.

However, the Timorese leadership, forged out of an unevenly matched struggle and whose character was never one of shying away from difficulties, is confident and sure that better times and greater capacity lie just around the corner and that we can rise above the doubts and apprehensions.

Whilst responsibilities have been mandated to UNTAET, the CNRT reaffirms its own moral and political responsibilities to the valiant people of East Timor, responsibilities which it assumed throughout the whole struggle.

CNRT is committed to working actively and productively with UNTAET, serving the interests of the Timorese people throughout the whole transition period, whilst never losing sight of the national interests which will prevail in the post-transition period.

It is in this spirit that the CNRT commits itself to working for the East Timorese people, because serving the interests of the people is the CNRT´s raison d´être.

It was a consolation to receive the continued sympathy of the international community, expressed in the Tokyo Donors´ Meeting held on 17 and 18 December, and to know that the Timorese people are thought to be worthy recipients of such tremendous support. Once again, I appeal to the governments of the world to act swiftly on their pledges so that the rehabilitation of essential infrastructure is able to commence, permitting UNTAET to put in place the effective administration which is so urgently needed.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR AND A NEW MILLENNIUM OF PEACE TO ALL THE WORLD´S PEOPLES.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
President of CNRT

Díli, 31 December, 1999